(c) The prices of MS/ATF/SKO are administered by the Government and there was no revision in the prices of these products as Oil Pool Account is still having deficit of Rs. 5821 crores as on 31.1.99. The naphtha price has been reduced by IOC by Rs. 250/MT w.e.f. 1st February, 1999.

Setting up of Regulatory Bodies in Petroleum Sector

419. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up three separate regulatory bodies to monitor and supervise the petroleum sector; and

(b) if so, what will be the functions of these bodies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) This Ministry has proposals to set up three regulatory bodies for petroleum sector with their main functions as indicated below:—

(i) **Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority** — The proposed main functions of this authority are — promotion of investment, prevention of entry barriers and catefisation, monitoring of supplies & prices and promotion of customer satisfaction.

(ii) **Gas Regulatory Authority** — This authority is proposed to regulate the operation of gas transmission and distribution networks. It would also ensure quality and security of supply and secure compliance with technical and safety standards besides settling disputes between various gas marketeers and the consumers.

(iii) **Hydrocarbons Regulatory and Development Authority** — It will deal with upstream petroleum sector activities and will primarily advise on the issues relating to optimal exploration of Hydrocarbons in the country and abroad, offering of acreage for exploration and exploitation under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). It will review, regulate and enforce safety aspects of oilfields operations and also review exploration programmes of the companies under the existing laws.

Dry Well in Cauvery Basin

420. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after five months of drilling ONGC struck a dry well at 745 meters below the sea in Cauvery basin;

(b) if so, whether the survey failed to point out the potential oil field; and

(c) the steps proposed to strengthen initial feedback accurately and stop mismanagement in the exploration work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Recently ONGC has drilled an exploratory wel (CDW-1-1A) at a water depth of 771 m in Cauvery Basin. No hydrocarban was struck at this well.

(b) Seismic surveys along with analysis of data obtained through various other surveys indicate possible entrapment situations only. The presence of hydrocarbons or otherwise is established only after drilling of well(s).

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) above. However, information gathered during drilling will be a valuable geological input for better understanding of the area.